

THE PATHOLOGY AND SURGERY OF THE VEINS OF THE LOWER LIMB. By Harold Dodd, Ch.M.(L'pool), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), and F. B. Cockett, M.S.(Lond.), F.R.C.S.(Eng.). (Pp. ix + 462; figs. 313. 65s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1956.

WHEN the modern housewife reads in a cookery book that she must use the yolks of six eggs in a recipe she expects the results to warrant the expense. The recipe for the cure of varicose veins has been getting more complicated in recent years, since we now know that we can seldom exclude the high pressures in the superficial veins of the leg by a ligation at the groin alone. The authors of this book give many excellent reasons why five egg-yolks will not do in the treatment of venous pathology in the lower limb. Indeed, in the foreword by Dr. R. R. Linton of the Massachusetts General Hospital we are promised that the surgeons' own varicose veins will come to further harm at his work, since he makes the observation that still more radical approaches will be used to interrupt additional communicating veins than those described in the text.

S. T. Anning, M.A., M.D., deals with the historical aspect as completely as nineteen pages crammed with interesting facts and pictures will allow. The pages might have been better used had half the facts been excluded and the high lights been allowed to shine more brightly.

The surgical anatomy is treated in an admirable manner with extremely good photographs of very painstaking dissections as well as a number of clear diagrams showing the communicating veins between the superficial and deep systems. The short chapter on the physiology of veins by C. I. Murphie is the most useful part of the book. It emphasizes, with beautiful clarity, the importance of a thorough knowledge of function related to structure. This is desirable in dealing with any part of the body, but cannot be forgotten for one moment in the cardiovascular system.

The rest of the book is very complete in the present state of our knowledge, and is easily read. The clinical diagnosis and special tests, such as venography, are clearly described and the treatment is given in enough detail to allow the surgeon to carry it out from the book. S. A. V.

SUBARACHNOID HÆMORRHAGE. By John N. Walton, M.D.(Durh.), M.R.C.P. (Pp. xv + 350; figs. 25. 30s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1956.

THE need for a comprehensive survey of subarachnoid hæmorrhage has been appreciated since the present spate of surgical publications commenced. This has been ably supplied by Dr. Walton in a well-balanced and detailed account written for the general physician to whom most of the patients are initially sent. It should remain the standard book of reference for some time.

The chapters on physical examination and pathology, together occupying 115 pages, may be considered rather exhaustive for so limited a subject. It is the sections on prognosis and treatment which will be of most value to the physician. That surgical investigation and treatment should be adopted is no longer a controversial matter, but the difference in operative mortality between series (varying from 3 per cent. to 55 per cent.) is a sufficient indication of the obstacles to statistical evaluation—the small numbers of patients, the different intervals between hæmorrhage and operation, the variations in technique and the different criteria for surgery. Most recent publications deal with selected series of patients which bear little relation to the treatment of subarachnoid hæmorrhage as a whole. It is pointed out that the results of many series should only be measured against the risk of fatal recurrence after the initial attack has been weathered.

The account of the surgical management covers subarachnoid hæmorrhage as a whole and indicates the benefit which may be expected by a judicious use of surgery. It is insufficiently stressed that early consultation with a neurosurgeon in what is often a neurosurgical condition is essential. The author estimates that in his conservatively managed series an immediate and remote mortality of over 60 per cent. might have been reduced to less than 35 per cent. An excellent bibliography and index is appended. D. S. G.